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		ENTRAL INTELLIGENCE NAL FOREIGN ASSESSM		
		25 July 1980		
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MEMORANDUM				
	Iran:	US Non-Lethal Mili	itary Options	. 25X1
		Summary	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	25X1
		a range of non-let fy pressure on Iran	thal options avail-	
	Increa of Ira	ase naval activity an.	in the vicinity	
		additional troops of iddle East.	or aircraft into	
	Initia of Ira	ate reconnaissance an.	overflights	
	Mine c	or blockade Iranian	n ports.	
		these military acto to isolate Iran.	ions the US could ste	p up 25X1
the release	e of the US	S hostages. Short	se measures would lea of obtaining this ob ntage of again underl	jective,
US helpless any action	sness in de against Ir ts success	ealing with the hos ran will be measure in fr <u>eeing</u> the hos	stages. At this poin ed by other countries stages, no matter who	it, in
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Asia Analyt Political A	tic Center, Analysis an	nd coordinated with	of the Scharie of the Scharica Division, Office h the National Intell	e of Ligence
		f, Near East South	Questions and commen Asia Division,	25X1
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25X1	Increased naval, troop or air activity in the region short of a blockade or mining would not have much impact in Tehran and would be viewed as an attempt to improve President Carter's domestic standing.	
25X1	High altitude reconnaissance flights over Iran or flights along the coast would have little impact in Tehranthe Iranians already believe the US is engaged in a major espionage campaign designed to bring down the Khomeini regime. Moderate Arab governments and some West European allies would express concern that the US was behaving recklessly and inviting a Soviet response.	
	Blockading or mining Iranian harbors would strengthen the hardliners who oppose any compromise with the US. Khomeini would call for Muslim protests against the US, and Iranian leftists would urge cooperation with Moscow.	25>
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25X1	The Iranian opposition would applaud a show of US resolve toward Iran. The exiles might interpret such actions as a sign the US would back them with its own forces.	25X1
	The Impact in Tehran	
	The US would gain relatively few immediate benefits from the use of non-lethal options. Renewed military pressure through the ostentatious movement of US forces or the beginning of	

overflights would show continued US concern but would be unlikely to have significant impact on the Iranian regime. Even such relatively drastic measures as a naval blockade or mining would almost certainly not lead to release of the hostages or the collapse of the Khomeini regime; indeed the country would probably draw closer together in the face of the US threat, at least for several months:

> --Khomeini would seek to exploit US moves to stir anti-American and anti-Western sentiment. In the past, he has responded to pressure tactics by becoming even more inflexible and rigid.

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- --Tehran would seek to mobilize Islamic opinion against the US. In response to a blockade or mining, Tehran radio would call for Muslims--especially Shia Muslims in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states--to strike at US installations and oil facilities. The government would probably call for a meeting of the Islamic Conference and press for strong anti-US resolutions.
- --The militants might again press for trials of the hostages, but we doubt that they would execute any hostages unless Iranians were killed by US forces.
- --In the event of a blockade or mining, President Bani-Sadr and members of the government inclined to support a negotiated end to the crisis would adopt a harder line against the US. The hardline clerics and their supporters would try to manipulate the US move to weaken the moderates and further their own political ambitions.

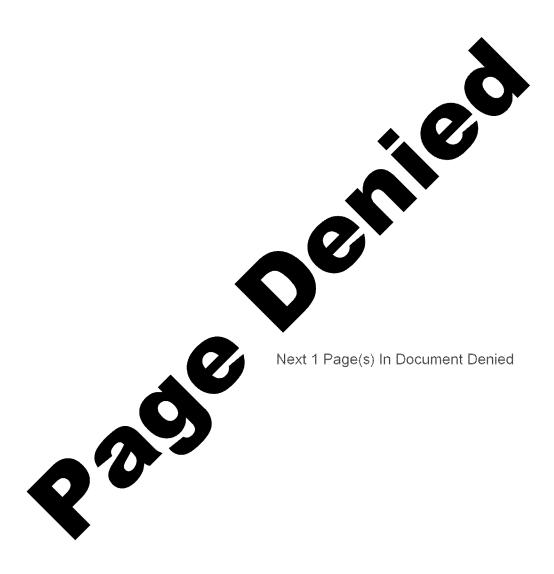
-- The Iranians might accept limited Soviet military aid such as minesweepers and would probably accept and publicize Soviet offers to provide

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Iranian leftists, in particular the Tuden Party, would urge that Tehran turn to the USSR for aid against the US, but Khomeini and other senior Iranian leaders would not want to align Iran too closely with Moscow.

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We do not rule out the possibility that the Iranians might challenge US military moves with naval or air forces. Tehran's primary objective would be to impress world opinion rather than to gain military advantages.



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	The reaction of radical Arabs (Libya, Syria, Algeria, South Yemen, and the PLO) to low-key US actions would be hostile but probably remain pro forma. Propaganda attacks would be made on any Arab states that cooperated with the US.	25
	A US blockade of Iran would provoke a strenuous reaction. The radical states would organize anti-US demonstrations against US Embassies which could lead to similar actions in moderate Islamic states. Libya would undoubtedly attempt to organize some kind of joint use of the oil weapon. The Libyans probably would fail to obtain an Arab consensus, although their prospects for success would grow if the crisis dragged on. The radical oil producers might be inclined, however, to announce a reduc-	
l	tion in oil production, which would strengthen prices softened by the current oil "glut", but which could be billed as a political move.	
	Given Iraq's problems with Tehran, Baghdad probably would not react strongly to US moves such as reconnaissance flights, although some propaganda response would be needed to maintain Iraq's image as a leading opponent of superpower meddling. Dispatch of additional US warships to the Gulf would produce stronger rhetoric but few direct actions against US interests. The budding political dialogue with the US would slow. Iraq would see US action against Iran as a troublesome gesture threatening to increase both superpower's presence in the area.	
	We doubt that Iraq could remain passive to a US blockade. Iraq's options are largely limited to diplomacy and propaganda. Specific responses might include shelving of the dialogue with the US and organizing more aggressive opposition to US-Omani military cooperation. An Iraqi military reaction is likely only if Iraq's seaborne access to the Gulf from Basrahits primary portis blocked by US action in the Shatt al-Arab.	٦ ^-
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